

Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of 2002 Biennial Regulatory Review -
Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules
and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202
of the Telecommunications Act of 1996,
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking,
MM Docket No. 02-277, (rel. Sept. 23, 2002)

To: The Secretary, FCC Commissioners, and Chief, Media Bureau

Dear sir/madam:

I am writing to you as a graduate student at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, where I study media systems in comparative international perspective.

That perspective helps us carefully consider the effects of structuring media systems everywhere along the spectrum from complete state monopoly, of the kind found in totalitarian states, to nearly complete lack of regulation, which leads to corporate oligopoly or monopoly across all forms of media. The comparative literature is clear: neither one of these extremes is desirable.

The state must not interfere with the free press, meaning censorship of content should not take place. At the same time, the state must regulate ownership in order to avoid media monopoly, duopoly, or oligopoly. One, two, or a very small number of corporations controlling television, radio, print, and internet channels is emphatically NOT an ownership structure that contributes to the freedom and diversity of expression America prides herself on.

I urge you to think in these terms when considering docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In its goals to promote competition and diversity of media market, the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate the negative affects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition, I support the FCC's plan to hold a public hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA in February 2003. I strongly encourage the Commission to hold similar hearings in all parts of the country and solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be

the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you,

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